

Health and Physical Development

Self Care

Strategies for Early Educators

- Teach and model hygienic practices (e.g., washing hands, covering mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, and dental care).
- Use interesting and entertaining ways to practice personal care and self-help skills (e.g., add baby doll outfits and clothing with fasteners to the dramatic play center).
- Provide instruction and facilitate ample opportunities for children to practice self-care skills as independently as they are able (e.g., verbally or nonverbally asking for help, feeding themselves, dressing, washing hands, toileting, and locating personal items).
- Maintain environments that support self care and hygiene (child-size sink, toilet, coat rack, toothbrushes, etc.).
- Encourage children to show independence in self care practices. Provide time, support, and equipment as needed.

Strategies for Families

- Demonstrate and talk with your child about hygienic practices such as hand washing, bathing and proper dental care.
- Provide opportunities for your child to practice self care skills as independently as possible, honoring your own cultural framework. Examples include asking for help when appropriate, feeding oneself, dressing, washing hands, toileting, and locating personal items.

Safety Awareness

Strategies for Early Educators

- Provide a safe, healthy, supportive environment with appropriate supervision.
- Teach safety rules and model safe practices (e.g., bus safety, playground safety, staying with the group, safe use of classroom materials, and knowing personal identification information).
- Teach and model appropriate responses to potentially dangerous situations, including fire, violent weather, and strangers or other individuals who may cause harm.

- Provide and monitor appropriate media content. Eliminate access to violent and inappropriate programming, video games, and movies.
- Report all suspected child abuse or neglect.

Strategies for Families

- Provide a safe, healthy, supportive environment for your children, with appropriate supervision.
- Talk about safe practices and model them yourself, such as looking both ways before crossing streets and wearing a helmet when bicycling. Use seatbelts and child-restraint seats. Make sure children know their full name and other personal identification information.
- Discuss with your child appropriate responses to potentially dangerous situations, such as inappropriate touching. Teach them fire safety rules and how to use 911 to summon help.
- Monitor what your child sees on television and at the movie theater and eliminate access to violent and inappropriate shows, video games, and films.

Motor Skills

Strategies for Early Educators

- Provide daily opportunities and a variety of activities for children to use handheld tools and objects.
- Model the use of drawing and writing tools in daily activities.
- Plan activities that use a variety of materials to support fine motor skill development, with adaptations as needed (paper, pencils, crayons, safety scissors, play dough, manipulatives, blocks, etc.).
- Provide child-size tables and chairs.
- Supervise and encourage appropriate use of materials to foster greater success and enjoyment.
- Encourage children to take part in active play every day, such as climbing, running, hopping, rhythmic movement, dance, and movement to music and games.
- Supervise and participate in daily outdoor play. Provide adequate space and age-appropriate equipment and materials, with adaptations as needed.
- Plan daily physical activities that are vigorous as well as developmentally and individually appropriate.

Strategies for Families

- Provide your child with a variety of tools and objects that small hands can hold, manipulate and use - such as silverware, toothbrush, comb, or hairbrush.

- Show your child how you use drawing and writing tools in your daily activities (for example, creating a grocery list, jotting down a telephone number, addressing an envelope, or using the computer to write a letter).
- Keep a ready supply of simple materials such as paper, pencils, crayons, play dough, and blocks available in a place where your child can work with them for extended periods of time.
- Make physical activity a big part of your child's daily life - running, hopping, dancing, playing games, and moving rhythmically.
- Supervise and take part in frequent periods of outdoor play and forms of exercise that enhance physical fitness.

Physical Health and Growth

Strategies for Early Educators

- Provide time for frequent exercise and active play by limiting the use of television and videos in the classroom.
- Encourage and support children's need for rest and relaxation by scheduling both active and quiet times.
- Model and discuss healthy eating habits and provide nutritious snacks and meals.
- Talk with families about health concerns that may be affecting a child's development (e.g., growth, hearing, vision, and appropriate clothing for weather conditions).
- Help families identify and use local health, medical, and dental resources for routine checkups and treatment of illness.
- Increase opportunities, supervise and actively participate in children's outdoor play.
- Play visual and auditory discrimination games such as "I spy" and take listening walks.

Strategies for Families

- Encourage exercise and active play and limit the time your child spends watching television, playing video games, and using the computer.
- Establish routines for bedtime and quiet time.
- Set an example with healthy eating habits and make sure your child has adequate nutrition.
- Identify and use local health, medical, and dental resources for routine medical and dental checkups and treatment of illness.
- Make sure children are properly dressed for weather conditions and activities.
- Increase outdoor play and provide appropriate supervision.